

more bombs must be dropped? How many more deaths must occur before you stop this failed policy and give diplomacy an opportunity to work?

ON H.R. 644, PRESCRIPTION DRUG FAIRNESS FOR SENIORS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise to put an end to a national disgrace. Plainly speaking, I am talking about price gouging, price gouging some of the most vulnerable members of our community, our seniors.

Americans widely support programs to ensure the health and welfare of older Americans. We have Social Security, we have Medicare, as well as housing programs, nutrition programs and programs that really protect our low-income seniors. Seniors today have less fear of being taken advantage of because of consumer laws and senior abuse laws that protect them. But there is one area where we clearly have failed, and that is to ensure that prescription drugs are affordable, affordable to the people who need them the most, our seniors.

The latest surveys indicate that 86 percent of Medicare beneficiaries take prescription drugs and that the elderly in the United States, who make up only 12 percent of our population, use one-third of the prescription drugs sold in this Nation. The need for prescription drugs to treat such diseases as arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, is simply a fact of life for seniors, or a fact of death. A few years ago, a survey of seniors reported that 13 percent of older Americans had to choose between eating or buying medicine.

In Sonoma and Marin Counties, the district I represent, the two counties north of the Golden Gate bridge, two individuals that I have come to know, Roy and Ivera Cobbs of Sebastopol, have had to make some very difficult decisions around their prescription drugs. What they decided was, she would take her prescription drugs and he would not because they could not afford both. That is not the way we are supposed to be treating our seniors.

Also in Sonoma and Marin County, the area Agencies on Aging and Green Thumb have told me some other stories. They tell me about cases where seniors just do not buy food because they have to have prescription drugs, or they take part of their prescription every other day instead of every day or once a day instead of twice a day, as prescribed by their doctors, because they cannot afford to pay for the whole dosage. And for the reason some seniors cannot pay for them keeps our seniors from having the best health care they can. This reason, I believe, is sole-

ly on the shoulders of the Nation's largest drug companies, because they engage in discriminatory pricing. If you are a favored customer, like an HMO, like a large insurance company, you pay less, much less for prescription drugs. But if you are an older person, on Medicare, you pay a premium price for your drugs.

In the district I represent, Sonoma County seniors pay on the average of 145 percent more for the most commonly used drugs than favored customers pay for the same drugs. For one drug, they pay 242 percent more than favored customers. I know this, because I asked the minority staff of the Committee on Government Reform to look into prescription drug pricing in Sonoma and Marin Counties. I released the results to that report to my community and its central conclusion can be summed up in the report subtitle, Drug Companies Profit at the Expense of Older Americans. As Members can see by these charts, for Sonoma County alone, the study looked into five commonly used prescription drugs, charted their price at local pharmacies and compared those prices to what the Federal Government pays for the same drugs. The Federal negotiated price is nearly the same, you must know, as that charged to favored private customers, large insurance companies and HMOs. Senior citizens and other individuals who pay for their own drugs pay more than twice as much for these drugs than do the drug companies' most favored customers. For some drugs listed in the report, the price is even more outrageous. Synthroid, for example, a hormone treatment, costs Sonoma County seniors 1,738 percent more than it cost the manufacturer's favored customers. By looking at these charts, we can see that for Medicare patients, those who need the cholesterol drug Zocor, their costs are significantly greater than the favored customers. This comes out to \$115 for Medicare patients and \$34 for the favored customers. That is 231 percent different. The difference is not in price because the HMOs, the large insurance companies and government buyers are able to negotiate and buy in bulk. The difference is because they are charging seniors to make up the difference for what they cut for their most favored customers.

INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO HELP AMERICA'S FARMERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NETHERCUTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Madam Speaker, American agriculture today and rural communities today face an extraordinary challenge, the challenge of having farm policy change in 1996 with the

consent and approval of this Congress and the consent and approval of the President of the United States for the good, to have an opportunity to have less farming for the government and more farming for the market. Overall, combined with the freedom that this new agriculture policy provides and the additional expenditure of taxpayer dollars for agriculture research with the movement toward reduction of Federal regulations that hampered the farmer's freedom to do what the farmer does best, and that is farm for the market and other changes that were made in the 1996 farm bill, it has overall been a good thing. What the American farmer faces today is low prices and lack of markets. Our farmers do not have the ability to market overseas the products that we grow so well in this country.

My State of Washington is a perfect example, and the Fifth Congressional District is a more narrow example of a perfect example. That is, our farmers in the Fifth District grow wheat and barley and oats and peas and lentils and potatoes and apples, the best in the world. But yet most of our products, on our grain products and commodities, are exported overseas. My farmers are limited in those exports because of unilateral American sanctions on countries that used to be wonderful trading partners of Washington State farmers and agriculture in the West.

I have introduced legislation, H.R. 212, earlier in this Congress as a priority matter for not only the farmers of the Pacific Northwest but the farmers of the country. What that bill does is lift the unilateral sanctions that are currently in place by our government that prevent our farmers from selling to countries that other farmers around the world can sell to. We used to have a fine market in wheat sales to Iran and Iraq and the Sudan and other places that are currently sanctioned. The sanctions are imposed because of our disagreements with the terrorist policies and the enemy policies of these governments.

I disagree with those policies of those rogue nations that have used terror in the world and oppression in the world. But yet selling agriculture and medicine to those countries does not in my judgment pose a national security threat on our country. What it does as we unilaterally impose those sanctions is hurt our farmers. So H.R. 212 does two things. It lifts the sanctions that are currently in place for food and medicine only, and it gives the President the opportunity in the event that the President feels that lifting those sanctions poses a national security threat, the President has the ability to reimpose those sanctions on that basis. But in the meantime, it allows our farmers, then, to seek to reclaim those markets that we have lost by virtue of the sanctions.

In 1980, President Carter imposed a sanction on the Soviet Union for political purposes. Who did that hurt? It hurt the Olympics, and the American interest in the Olympics, and it hurt American farmers, a market that was a prime market for my farmers in the West. We have yet to get that agriculture market back by virtue of those sanctions back in 1980.

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Yesterday in the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies on which I serve as a subcommittee member I introduced a narrower version of H.R. 212 which would lift of the sanctions on food and medicine for these countries that are currently sanctioned, but it would not allow any government spending in connection with the lifting of those sanctions. In other words, the taxpayer would not bear any of the burden for allowing our farmers to deal directly with those countries and make sales. It is a \$6 billion plus market for our farmers in commodities as diverse as rice and corn and peas and wheat and barley. It is a great market that is exposed to our farmers.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, my friends on the appropriations subcommittee defeated this amendment by a vote of 28 to 24. It was a very close vote, but it was a great debate, and we ought to have that debate again on H.R. 212 and on this next version of this amendment that went into the appropriation bill yesterday.

So, I urge my colleagues to study H.R. 212, study the concept of lifting sanctions on food and medicine. It is a humanitarian basis that is good policy for our country, and it will absolutely help our agriculture markets who are struggling to find markets overseas.

One final point: In the event that we lift these sanctions and allow farmer-to-country correspondence and sales, it prevents the agriculture community that is in straits from coming to the Congress and seeking Federal tax dollars. It is the free market approach to agriculture success.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BROADCASTERS FAIRNESS IN ADVERTISING ACT OF 1999

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, today I am here to introduce the Broadcasters Fairness in Advertising Act of 1999. There is a silent and pervasive trend among ad agencies and the companies they represent to engage in discriminatory practices which are called, quote, "no urban/Spanish dictates" end of quote, and they are called, quote, "minority discounts," end of quote. The

term: "No urban slash Spanish dictates" means not advertising products on stations that cater to minorities. "Minority discounts" means paying minority-owned stations far less for advertising the same product that is paid to nonminority-owned stations. These policies have no business rationale and are purely discriminatory.

Madam Speaker, year in and year out minority broadcasters lose millions of dollars in revenues, however the advertising companies would have us believe otherwise. They will contend that they do not advertise in these stations because minorities do not buy their products.

For example, in a study conducted by the FCC, a major mayonnaise manufacturer told a station manager that, quote, black people do not eat mayonnaise, end of quote. Or worse, one minority station salesperson was told that, and I quote again, black people do not eat beef, end of quote. Such a blatantly absurd statement demonstrates the openly racist obstacles minority broadcasters face from the advertising industry.

My bill will prohibit discrimination against minority formatted stations by directing the FCC to adopt regulations to prevent such discrimination. It would also allow private right of action by any minority broadcaster who has been subjected to advertising discrimination. And finally, my bill will prohibit Federal agencies from contracting with ad agencies that utilize these discriminatory practices.

Madam Speaker, I sincerely hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me in supporting this very, very important initiative.

ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF KURDISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about democracy, a form of government which was invented in the 5th century B.C. by the Greeks in Athens, great city of Athens. The British honor democracy through their parliament, the Japanese have their Diet, the Duma serves the Russians, and of course here in the United States democracy is exercised right here on the floor of Congress. Democracy still remains the best hope for troubled humanity throughout the world.

With the end of the Cold War, Madam Speaker, we have seen a great expansion of the boundaries of democracy. The world is a better place today because many former Soviet republics now enjoy self determination and are given their rightful seats in the Hall of Nations. But auspicious as has been the

forward march of liberty, the world remains far from being free. Nations remain in captivity. The color of one's skin still bars some from feeling our common humanity. But the hope that we can rise to the challenge of total equality is enduring. People of goodwill are risking their lives against great odds. They know the rewards are worth the risks.

Madam Speaker, on May 24, 1999, just a few days from now, a nation whose voice has been silenced for too long will convene its first congress, unfortunately not in its own land but in Brussels, Belgium, and 150 delegates from around the world representing the Kurdish people of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran and the former Soviet republics will assemble for the purpose of raising their voice for their brothers and sisters who are denied a voice in Kurdistan. I salute the birth of this congress that represents a people as old as the dawn of history.

Madam Speaker, the Kurds are natives of the Middle East who inhabit a mountainous region as large as the State of Texas. They speak Kurdish, which is distinct from Turkish and Arabic but is closely linked with Persian. Having survived in mountain strongholds and ancient empires, they are now persecuted, denied their identity and forced to become Turks or Arabs or Persian by the states that were born in the early 20th century. Thirty million strong, they are viewed as beasts of burden or as cannon fodder, but never as Kurds who should enjoy human rights that we take for granted in this country.

It is a crime to be a Kurd in Turkey, Madam Speaker. Saddam Hussein has used chemical and biological weapons against them in Iraq. The theocracy in Tehran often machine guns the Kurdish dissidents in the city squares. The poignancy of the Kurdish situation hits closer to home when we realize that our own government is sometimes involved in their misery. Turkey boosts of American F-16 fighter planes, Sikorsky attack helicopters and M-60 battle tanks. Saddam Hussein, according to some declassified U.N. documents, had the support of 24 European companies to produce his deadly chemical fumes and biological fumes. Tehran's opposition to the Kurds has gone beyond Iran with the assassination of Kurdish leaders in Vienna and Berlin.

We all revere the words of Thomas Jefferson when he wrote in the Declaration of Independence: "When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."